



**CHELtenham**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Housing & Homelessness Strategy

## Action Plan Update 2014-15

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# 1. Introduction

Welcome to our Housing & Homelessness Strategy Action Plan update for 2014-15. This is the first of a series of annual updates for the Housing & Homelessness Strategy, highlighting key achievements since the Strategy was approved by Cabinet in July 2012.

Appendix 1 provides a more detailed update of our original (2012-17) Action Plan, noting progress against specific activities, and identifying new activities for the year ahead not previously considered within the original Action Plan.

## 2. National Context and Local Priorities

### 2.1 Welfare Reform

The Government's Welfare Reforms, which have been implemented since 2011, are set to continue. Most notable is the anticipated implementation of Universal Credit. The main aim of Universal Credit is to ensure that work pays; however, there are worries about how more vulnerable households will manage the proposed payment mechanisms, and there are continued concerns from social landlords that the move to Universal Credit will lead to an increase in rent arrears, and potentially debt and homelessness for some tenants.

Much work has been done to mitigate against any adverse impact of the reforms, and this work will continue as new reforms are implemented.

### 2.2 Supporting People Reforms

The County Council's Supporting People Programme is responsible for the commissioning of housing related support services to some of our most vulnerable residents. Significant savings are required to be made during the lifetime of the Supporting People Strategy 2011-2015 (funding will reduce from £20 million to £13 million). Cost saving decisions made by Supporting People has the potential to adversely affect some of our most vulnerable residents of Cheltenham. Cheltenham Borough Council will therefore continue to play a vital role in the Supporting People partnership in helping to shape future commissioning decisions.

### 2.3 The Private Rented Sector

Home ownership continues to remain out of reach for many households. This combined with a relatively short supply of affordable homes means that a growing private rented sector is inevitable. Cheltenham's position is generally reflective of the situation nationally. A key priority within our strategy is therefore to ensure that there remains a focus on bringing empty homes back into use, and in improving the quality of the private rented sector – with a particular focus on those homes that are unsafe and/or are in a state of disrepair. Equally important is the need to maintain our efforts on improving accessibility into the private rented sector for low-income households.

### 2.4 New Affordable Housing and the Affordable Rent product

The Council's position on Affordable Rents is detailed with our Tenancy Strategy (at Appendix 7 of our Housing & Homelessness Strategy).

The government's Affordable Rent product is set to continue for the foreseeable future, and the Council acknowledges that this product is necessary where Registered Providers require grant funding from the Homes and Communities Agency to help subsidise the provision of new affordable housing. The Council will therefore continue to support the Affordable Rent product, provided it delivers social housing that is affordable for low-income households.

There continues to be concern over the affordability of larger accommodation (4 bedrooms or more), where the Affordable Rent product is set at 80% of market rents. This concern arises from the Government's introduction of the Benefit Cap, which sets a cap on the level of benefits that households are entitled to. The Council will therefore continue to have a role in carefully assessing the potential affordability of such accommodation and negotiate accordingly with developers.

## **2.5 HRA self-financing mechanism**

The Government's introduction of the HRA self-financing regime has created some investment opportunities for the Council, both in the improvement of its existing social housing stock, exploring new community service opportunities and in the provision of new affordable housing.

The Council set out its long term HRA Business Plan in 2012, and updates to the HRA Plan are agreed by Cabinet annually

## **3. Turning Priorities into Outcomes**

In light of the Government reforms and emerging local needs our Housing & Homelessness Strategy identified 5 priorities for the Council, which are summarised below:

**Priority 1:** To increase the provision of Affordable Housing

**Priority 2:** To make the best use of existing housing stock

**Priority 3:** To improve access into suitable, affordable accommodation and helping households to stay in their homes for longer

**Priority 4:** To tackle the causes of homelessness

**Priority 5:** To create stronger, safer and healthier communities

These priorities support the delivery of the following **outcomes**:

- To enable people to live independently for longer and to lead more healthy lives
- To maximise housing opportunities for those in housing need, whilst maintaining balanced communities
- To reduce homelessness
- To reduce carbon emissions within housing stock
- To reduce fuel poverty
- To improve the quality and safety of our homes
- To reduce the number of empty homes
- To strengthen our neighbourhoods and making them feel safer

The next section of this Action Plan update details notable achievements against each of our priorities, and seeks to demonstrate how we are delivering against key outcomes.

## 4. Progress against our Priorities

### 4.1 Priority 1 – Increasing the provision of new affordable housing

#### 4.1.1 Key Achievements:

##### i. New affordable housing

Since 2012 there has been a notable increase in the delivery of new affordable housing from a number of Registered Providers. Cheltenham Borough Homes has pushed forward with its regeneration of St Pauls, and both Stonham and YMCA have progressed (or are progressing) with their refurbishment of their existing social (supported) housing. In addition, Sanctuary Housing have provided Cheltenham with our first Affordable Housing Extra Care Scheme, with allocations into these properties due to commence in March 2014.

The result is the delivery of 242 (165 net) of new affordable housing since 2012: 101 (38 net) in 2012-13 and an anticipated 141 (127 net) for 2013-14. The Table below details the specific schemes delivered by Registered Providers over the period:

Registered Provider	Completions 2012/13	Total		Forecast Completions 13/14	Total
Cheltenham Borough Homes	Regeneration of St Pauls – Hudson Street & Manser Street	48 (4 net gain)		Garage Sites: Brook Road Burma Avenue Malvern Street Imjin Road	14
Bromford Housing	Cat and Fiddle -Whaddon Road	16 (7 net gain)		Spirax Sarco – Guinevere Road	14
	Supported Scheme for young people				
Cottsway Housing	Silas Court – Hesters Way Road	17		Wymans Brook- Windyridge Road	13
				Midwinter – Prince Regent Avenue & Denman Avenue	32
				Midwinter – Denman Avenue	6
Guinness	Manor Court- Chargrove Lane	10			

<b>Hermitage</b>	Up Hatherley				
<b>Stonham Housing</b>	Quilter House – Grove Street Development Supported Housing	10 (no net gain)		Grove Flats – Grove Street Reprovision/ Redevelopment  Supported Housing	6  (no net gain)
				Cleveland Street – Redevelopment of Jenner Hse  Supported Housing	7 (1 net loss)
<b>Sanctuary Housing</b>				Delancey Hospital - Middleton House  Extra Care	49
<b>Total</b>		101			141

## ii. Publication of a Draft Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for Consultation

A draft JCS, covering Cheltenham, Tewkesbury and Gloucester authority boundaries, was published for consultation in October 2013. It sets out the identified need and location for housing and employment and supporting infrastructure in our area up to 2031. The consultation period ended on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2013, and representations are being considered prior to a pre-submission consultation, which is anticipated in the spring 2014.

## iii. Publication of a new updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

A new SHMA was commissioned in 2013 to provide the most up to date evidence base on the assessment of housing needs across the Borough and Gloucestershire as a whole. Following consultation with key stakeholders, the Council is now in the final stages of signing-off this document.

## iv. Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment.

The GTTSAA has been undertaken and signed off as approved by all District Authorities across the County. The Assessment has identified the need for two pitches to be provided in the Cheltenham Borough.

A county-wide call for sites has now been undertaken to help inform how identified needs can be met across districts.

### 4.1.2 New for the year ahead:

In addition to the actions identified within the 2012-17 Action Plan, we will seek to deliver on the activities listed below. Details on how we plan to deliver on these new actions are contained with our Action Plan update (Appendix 1).

#### i. New Affordable Housing

127 (net 71) new affordable homes are currently estimated to be delivered during 2014-15. This includes 73 units (net gain of 11 units) from the refurbishment of the YMCA. Actual numbers may change over time as development plans become clearer during the course of the new financial year.

**ii. Adoption of the Joint Core Strategy**

Following recent public consultation, the draft JCS is now being reviewed in light of the representations made during this consultation period.

The draft JCS is scheduled for a pre-submission consultation in Spring 2014, followed by submission to the Secretary of State towards the end of 2014, with a view to it then being formally adopted.

**iii. Development of a Cheltenham Plan and supplementary documents**

Preparation of a Cheltenham Plan is now underway, and a programme setting out its key stages will be drafted in the context of the emerging JCS.

**iv. 'Preferred Partners' in the JCS area**

We will examine with our neighbouring Local Authorities the potential for developing Preferred Partner approach (i.e. consortium of Registered Providers) for the strategic sites within the JCS area.

**v. Nomination agreements within the strategic site allocations**

We will negotiate with our neighbouring Local Authorities how affordable housing will be allocated between those Authorities on the strategic sites.

## **4.2 Priority 2 – Making Best Use of Existing Housing**

### **4.2.1 Key Achievements in Private Sector Housing**

**i. Improving Standards of Private Sector Accommodation.**

During 2012/13, 242 homes were improved in the private sector as a direct result of enforcement action undertaken by the Council's Enforcement Team.

We continue to provide key statutory services for Cheltenham residents, responding to their needs by improving the general stock of private housing within Cheltenham.

**ii. Improving the quality of the homes of older, disabled and vulnerable people through the provision of grants/loans.**

In 2012/13 106 households were given financial assistance in this way, totalling £708k in capital expenditure.

These grants/loans were provided to vulnerable occupiers who were either unable financially to improve their homes to safety standards or who required assistance by way of having their homes adapted to better meet their needs.

**iii. Reducing the number of empty homes.**

In 2012/13 118 homes that were empty for a period of 12 months or more were brought back into use as a result of direct action by the Council.

In order to further support our efforts in tackling empty homes, Cheltenham Borough Council has also invested in creating a new post (financed from part of the revenues received from the National Homes Bonus). Their role is dedicated solely to reducing the number of homes lying empty within our borough.

In addition, in July 2012, Cabinet approved the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders to bring empty homes back into use. The use of CPOs are a last resort and are targeted at tackling the most difficult properties. To date, 3 homes have been identified as requiring CPO action.

**iv. Achieving value for money in the commissioning of services promoting energy efficiency.**

We have reviewed our contractual arrangements with Warm & Well in light of the Government's roll-out of the Green Deal. This has resulted in the Council providing Warm & Well with a new service level agreement, which is more advice focussed and which ensures that maximum advantage is taken from the Green Deal and other government initiatives.

In particular, this review has also resulted in the Council making a saving of £50k/year from the £60k/year capital funding currently allocated to this area.

**4.2.2 New for the year ahead in the private sector:**

In addition to the actions identified within the 2012-17 Action Plan, we will seek to deliver on the activities listed below. Details on how we plan to deliver on these new actions are contained with our Action Plan update (Appendix 1).

**i. A new Accreditation Scheme for private landlords**

A new Accreditation Scheme will be developed for private landlords in Cheltenham, with a view to improving standards in the private rented sector. Any new Scheme will first require Cabinet approval.

**ii. Surveys of key HMO hot spots**

We will look to survey the St Pauls area to check compliance for mandatory licensing and to collect data to assist in decision making in respect of additional licensing in the area.

We will also seek to carry out a survey on Cheltenham's High Street, as a follow-up to a 2013/14 survey, to explore further whether there are any additional housing issues that the Council is currently unaware of.

**iii. Enforcing sales on empty homes**

We will explore the use of Enforced Sales of empty homes as an alternative option to Compulsory Purchase Orders in relevant cases. Again, this would require Cabinet approval.



### **4.2.3 Key Achievements for Cheltenham Borough Homes on CBC's affordable housing**

#### **i. Maintaining Homes at Decent Homes Standards**

Contracts are in place to maintain homes at decent homes standards. In 2012/13 158 properties benefited from external decent homes works, with a further 250 anticipated during 2013/14. In terms of internal decent homes works, 37 bathrooms and/or kitchens were replaced in 2012/13, with 35 new replacements projected for 2013/14.

#### **ii. Improving External Communal Areas**

Initiatives to improve external communal areas have been completed for Hobart House, Shakespeare Road, Shelley Road and Bush Court. This has contributed to improving security, visual appearance and amenity value, and any potential concerns about antisocial behaviour in the area.

#### **iii. Installation of Carbon Monoxide Detectors**

There is an ongoing programme to fit Carbon Monoxide detectors to all managed properties with gas installations. These works, although not statutory requirements, represent good practice in managing risk associated with gas safety.

#### **iv. Improving Energy Efficiencies and Sustainability**

In 2012/13 a pilot programme of photovoltaic cell installation was undertaken. As a result, 49 properties were fitted with PVPs, and now benefit from free electricity generated by these units. The success of this pilot has resulted in the procurement of a contract to identify suitable properties and to fit more PVPs.

### **4.2.4 Next Steps for the year ahead:**

#### **i. Maintaining Decent Homes Standard**

An ongoing programme of works will continue to ensure that the decent homes standard is maintained. It is anticipated that in 2014/15 a total of 230 properties will benefit from internal and/or external works in order to maintain standards.

#### **ii. Improving External Communal Areas**

Projects are currently ongoing for Lewis Road and Seacombe Road, and shortly to commence at Elgar House & Coates House. Larger sites earmarked for the 2014/15 programme are Australia and Canberra Houses, and Benhall Gardens.

#### **iii. Improving Energy Efficiencies and Sustainability**

Subject to government tariffs remaining at current levels, it is anticipated that up to 750 of council homes could benefit from the programme (referred to above) by October 2014.

## **4.3 Priority 3 – Improving access to and maintaining suitable accommodation**

### **4.3.1 Key Achievements and Next Steps:**

## **i. Review of Gloucestershire Homeseeker's Choice Based Lettings Allocations Scheme**

Gloucestershire Homeseeker's Allocations Scheme has been reviewed, and following consultation, a number of changes were recommended and approved by Cabinet in April 2013.

These changes have since been implemented. Key changes include firming up priority to households affected by the introduction of the government's under-occupancy housing benefit regulations (the 'bedroom tax') and ensuring bedroom entitlement eligibility was aligned with Housing Benefits regulations so that households on low incomes are not adversely affected.

The impact of the government's continued reforms will be monitored against the Allocations Scheme, and where required, further changes to the scheme will be recommended. Consideration will also be given to new Allocations Guidance recently published by the Communities and Local Government on giving additional preferences to local people, and its potential impact on tackling homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation – adverse or otherwise.

## **ii. Commissioning Review of the Council's Housing Options Service**

The Council undertook a commissioning review of its Housing Options Service. This included an Options Appraisal and a systems thinking review, which led to a number of activities that were then undertaken to improve performance further on an already high performing service.

In July 2013, the Council approved the transfer of service to Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH). The service was transferred to CBH on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

The strategic homelessness and allocations elements cannot be transferred to CBH, and have therefore remained with the Council. It will therefore be vital that the operational – strategic links remain strong in order to ensure the successful delivery of this service in the future. We will seek to achieve this through regular monitoring and review arrangements with CBH.

## **iii. SPA Lettings: a Tenancy Management Service to be delivered by the Housing Options team**

The Housing Options Service carried out an options appraisal on how it could seek to improve access into the private rented sector for homeless households in light of the recent welfare reforms. As a result, the service put together a Business Case for the development of 'SPA Lettings,' a tenancy management service for landlords letting their homes to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness via the Housing Options Team. Cabinet approved the business case for developing this service in July 2013, and work is underway to launch the service in the new financial year.

## **iv. A new 1 year contract with Supporting People for the delivery of housing related support services for older people in Cheltenham**

CBC has entered into a new 12 month contractual agreement with Supporting People to consider how CBC can (via Cheltenham Borough Homes) transition to more flexible housing related support arrangements for older people, both within

CBC sheltered housing schemes and within the surrounding neighbourhoods. CBH have put together a transition plan, outlining in broad terms how this plan will be implemented over the 12 month period from October 2013. A service transformation review is currently being undertaken in consultation with tenants and stakeholders, which will result in an agreed Sheltered Housing Standard for Cheltenham.

**v. New commissioning arrangements for the delivery of housing-related support to vulnerable households in Cheltenham**

New direct access accommodation provision and a drop-in, assessment and referral centre is now available in Cheltenham for homeless individuals with chaotic and complex needs. Commissioned by Supporting People and delivered by P3, this provision replaces the Nightshelter provision previously available in Gloucester. (Gloucester also has 8 new units of direct access accommodation). Cheltenham Borough Council had Officer representation on the panel which re-commissioned this service.

The new direct access provision complements a new Community Based Support service that was also commissioned by Supporting People in 2013, along with a jointly commissioned Drugs & Alcohol support and treatment service now provided by Turning Point.

In addition, a new Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS) is now in place, with significant emphasis, again, on community based support. Opportunities are currently being explored to develop places of safety provision within the Borough (and across the county as a whole).

Over the coming period, we will be examining current commissioning arrangements for Mental Health and Young People services and examine any joint commissioning opportunities between these services with Supporting People. We will also review the housing pathways for these groups. In addition, will we assist in embedding the newly commissioned Supporting People services within the Borough, and regularly review their performance against outcomes via our Supporting People partnerships.

#### **4.4 Priority 4 – Tackling Homelessness**

Tackling homelessness continues to be a priority for the Council. The onset of the welfare reforms since 2011 has heightened the risk of homelessness, and there continues to be an upward trend of rising homelessness acceptances by councils nationally.

However, since the introduction of the Housing & Homelessness Strategy in 2012, Cheltenham Borough Council has bucked the national trend. The table below shows our recent performance

Year	Homelessness Acceptances	Homelessness Preventions (Housing Options only)	Households in Temporary Accommodation
2013/14 (to 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec)	1	187	11
2012/13	28	259	12
2011/12	42	235	16

The reduction in statutory homelessness has come about as a consequence of our continued success in preventing homelessness. The result is a further reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation.

#### **4.4.1 Other notable achievements:**

##### **vi. Benefit Take-Up, Debt prevention and Financial Inclusion Services**

County Community Projects are currently commissioned by the Council to provide services to Cheltenham residents on debt advice, financial inclusion and benefit take-up. They are also commissioned to advise residents of their housing rights and to challenge adverse decisions, where appropriate. This service is delivered at Cheltenham First Stop alongside Housing Options and other key services, and continues to remain robustly monitored by the Council.

In addition, benefit take-up work undertaken by the Housing Options Service has been reviewed in light of the above contract and the welfare reforms, so that focus is specifically on those households who are presenting as homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless, with the scope of our work widened so that money advice and financial inclusion is also considered.

##### **vii. Review of the Allocations Scheme and Cheltenham Borough Homes' My Move Scheme**

The review of Gloucestershire Homeseeker's Allocations Scheme (detailed on page 11 above) has also contributed to reducing the risk of homeless, as has CBH's reinvigorated My Move Scheme, which enables households who are under-occupying CBC social rented accommodation to downsize more easily.

##### **viii. Youth Homelessness Prevention Services**

Cheltenham Borough Council was given a grant of £80k by Communities & Local Government (CLG) to hold on behalf of the County Council and the District Housing Authorities in Gloucestershire, and to take the lead in the commissioning of a youth homelessness prevention service for Gloucestershire.

In partnership with the 6 other Local Authorities (including Gloucestershire County Council), Cheltenham Borough Council commissioned Infobuzz (the lead partner) and CCP to deliver peer education work within a number of targeted schools throughout each of the districts. The peer education work is delivered through a theatrical-style performance, made up of young people who have themselves experienced the challenges of being homeless. The shows are interactive and thought provoking. We are now within our second year of this project, and it is performing well.

##### **ix. County-wide Sanctuary Scheme**

The Council has entered into joint protocol arrangements on the delivery of a county-wide sanctuary scheme. This schemes makes homes safer for households at risk of domestic abuse from perpetrators who live outside the home.

The county-wide arrangements also enable the Council to draw on a central funding pot to assist in covering the costs of various target-hardening works.

##### **x. Housing & Support Forum – prevention funding**

The council provides an annual sum of £7,500 from the CLG's homelessness prevention fund to an organisation within the Housing & Support Forum which has successfully bid on providing a homelessness prevention initiative for the borough. Representatives from the forum vote for the organisation with the service idea they most prefer.

Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre (CHAC) were once again successful with their bid, which involves providing assistance to households moving on from supported housing into independent accommodation. This includes the supply of essential provisions to enable tenants to move into their new properties faster, thereby reducing void times, reducing 'bed-blocking' within supported housing and ensuring that tenants are better able to sustain their new tenancies right from the outset.

#### **xi. Assertive Outreach Work**

Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre are currently grant-funded by the Council to deliver assertive outreach services to rough sleepers and to those at risk of becoming rough sleepers as a result of having complex needs. The aim is to encourage individuals to take their first steps back on the pathway to independent living by bringing about more productive engagement with mainstream advice, support and treatment services.

The Assertive Outreach Service is now able to link closely with Supporting People's newly commissioned Direct Access Service delivered by P3, in addition to the County Council's jointly commissioned drugs and alcohol treatment and support services delivered by Turning Point (see page 12 above).

#### **xii. Jointly funded County Homelessness Coordinator**

Districts Authorities across the county were given a one-off pot of funding from the CLG to support joint working in tackling homelessness. To this end, we have recruited a County Homelessness Coordinator (Cotswold District Council is the lead District Authority), whose remit is to ensure there is more joined-up, coordinated approach to reducing homelessness. Achievements so far include: the implementation of the county-wide Reconnection Policy for individuals accessing supported housing, and the Cold Weather Protocol on accommodating rough sleepers. Work is currently underway to further develop links between Supporting People's newly commissioned services for homelessness and other organisations delivering related services which support our homelessness prevention outcomes.

Next steps are to explore how this CLG county funding can be used to support Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre's outreach work, potentially with the provision of a small pot of funding to open up more practical ways of helping rough sleepers into accessing accommodation.

### **4.4.2 Next steps for the year ahead:**

#### **i. Greater focus on 'non-priority' homeless households**

Work is already done with 'non-priority' homeless people (i.e. single people who are not considered to be vulnerable, but who are nevertheless homeless or threatened with homelessness). Current assistance can be by way of access into supported housing or Nightstop services (another homelessness prevention service commissioned by Cheltenham Borough Council, with a particular focus on young people), or by accessing social housing via Gloucestershire Homeseeker, or indeed as a result of assistance in finding accommodation in the private rented sector.

As a result of a small restructure with the team, the Housing Options Service will now have a dedicated Officer to focus more on those households in order to assist them more in finding and maintaining suitable alternative accommodation.

**ii. The launch of SPA Lettings Service**

Approval for the development of this tenancy management service was given by Cabinet in July 2013. The aim will be to launch the service during 2014/15 for households who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and who wish to access the private rented sector.

**iii. The NPSS Accreditation Service**

The National Practitioner Support Service has recently launched an accreditation service for Housing Options services. This is peer review led, so would require the willingness of other Local Authorities to wish to take part in the review of their homelessness and housing options services. We will therefore examine the peer review toolkit, and agree next steps, following discussions with our Local Housing Authority partners and Cheltenham Borough Homes (who are now responsible for the operational delivery of the Housing Options Service).

**iv. Tackling Rough Sleeping**

In addition to CHAC's Assertive Outreach Service, we will work closely with the County Homelessness Coordinator (referred to on p 11 above) to implement early intervention initiatives to reduce rough sleeping and the risk of rough sleeping.

## **4.5 Priority 5 – Creating stronger, safer and healthier communities**

### **4.5.1 Key Achievements**

**i. The Development of the Inspiring Families Project**

The Inspiring Families Group has been widened to incorporate vulnerable adults within their remit, and referral mechanisms continue to be worked on to maximise their effectiveness. Currently, 26 agencies are supporting the IF project, with direct delivery from 13 Trusted Individuals on 30 households.

**ii. Tackling Welfare Reform: a more coordinated approach**

There is now a broader understanding across agencies of the issues facing those who are affected by the welfare reforms. A range of activities have been undertaken to increase awareness of the work being done across all tenures, including the setting up of a Task & Finish Group within the Positive Participation Partnership, which resulted in a cross-tenure leaflet being produced and circulated to relevant organisations and households affected by the reforms in both the social housing and the private sector.

CBC and CBH also held a Members Seminar to cover the work being done across the different household tenures, and presentations have been delivered by Cheltenham Borough Homes, Guinness Hermitage and Bromford Housing to the Positive Participation Partnership and/or the Housing & Support Forum, to inform relevant

services of the work Registered Providers are doing to mitigate against any adverse impacts of those reforms on their tenants. In addition, a working group has been set up, comprising Registered Providers across the county to share ideas and best practice for mitigating against the impact of the reforms.

**iii. Improving joint working opportunities across the housing and voluntary sectors**

Task & Finish Groups, such as the Tackling Street Begging group have been set up by the Positive Participation Partnership, which include housing representation. In addition, another Task & Finish Group is underway which is taking a strengths-based approach to improving community resilience for older people within designated neighbourhoods. Links are being explored to consider how this project integrates with the work currently being undertaken by CBH in the way it looks to deliver more flexible older people's services.

**iv. Tackling antisocial behaviour**

We have reviewed and developed existing partnership arrangements for tackling anti-social behaviour. There is now an ASB Steering Group with Co-Chairs from Police, CBH and CBC who meet on a monthly basis to agree action on cases brought before them. Underneath this are ASB working groups for both Cheltenham North and South, who deal with day to day issues, referring the more serious cases to the ASB Steering Group for action.

**4.5.2 Next steps for the year ahead:**

**i. Tackling Antisocial Behaviour**

The Government have introduced new draft proposals to deal with asb issues, which among other things, offers more empowerment to individuals and communities. An ASB Project Group has now been set up to review these draft proposals and to implement the changes if or when they become law.

**ii. Tackling Welfare Reform**

We will, via CBH, seek to ensure that agencies who are committed to promoting financial inclusion continue to be well coordinated across Cheltenham to support the needs of all residents, regardless of tenure.

Currently, front line officers, both from CBH's Housing Options and Revenues Teams work closely on a day to day basis with key organisations delivering services which promote and support financial inclusion across all tenures.

CBH's Financial Inclusion Working Group has recently evolved into a project group for CBH; however, there is scope to widen the group out to all organisations again and for this to cut across all tenures, in light of the Housing Options Service being transferred to CBH. Currently, there is uncertainty over the timing of the implementation of Universal Credit - the next key welfare reform - but it is anticipated there will be a reforming of the wider group ahead of any such implementation.

**iii. Developing a social landlords forum for Registered Providers with social housing in Cheltenham.**

Discussions are underway to create a Registered Provider forum for Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury local authorities. This will reduce unnecessary duplication of meetings for Registered Providers, thereby maximising attendance as well as creating more opportunities for sharing best practice and learning.

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## Housing & Homelessness Strategy Action Plan Update and Progress made

### Priority 1 – Increasing the Provision of New Affordable Housing

Outcomes	Action Proposed	Action Taken/Achievements/Milestones
<p>1.1.1 We will have agreed within the Joint Core Strategy for Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury (JCS) the scope for the development of new homes (including affordable housing)</p> <p><b>New for the year ahead:</b></p> <p>1.1.2 We will have a Local Plan for Cheltenham which may be accompanied by new Supplementary Planning Guidance which reflects the council's requirements for the provision of affordable housing in Cheltenham</p>	<p>1.1.1 To work towards developing the Joint Core Strategy for adoption by full council</p> <p>1.1.2 To work towards the development of a new Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance for the provision of new Affordable Housing</p>	<p>Draft JCS published for consultation on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2013</p> <p>Pre-submission consultation scheduled for spring 2014</p> <p>Submission to Secretary of State scheduled winter 2014</p> <p><b>How this will be achieved:</b></p> <p>Preparation of the Cheltenham Plan now underway</p>
<p>1.2 We will have a better understanding of the</p>	<p>1.2.1 To support the development of a county-wide</p>	<p>A new County-wide Extra Care Strategy is in progress, with completion expected in 2014/15. District Authorities will have opportunities to inform the</p>

<p>potential models of Extra Care Housing that need to be delivered to meet local housing needs</p>	<p>Extra Care Strategy</p> <p><b>New for the year ahead:</b></p> <p>1.2.2 To work with the planning policy team to consider potentially suitable sites for the delivery of Extra Care, where there is a clear evidence base of need.</p>	<p>development of this strategy via the Homes and Communities Group</p> <p><b>How this will be achieved:</b></p> <p>By drawing on an up-to-date local plan evidence base including site assessment. This assessment is updated annually in winter and will inform site allocations in the Cheltenham Plan</p>
<p>1.3 We will have a better understanding of the current and likely future needs of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Communities requiring non bricks &amp; mortar accommodation and we will seek to identify potential provision options to help meet these needs</p>	<p>1.3.1 To undertake a Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTTSAA)</p> <p>1.3.2 To work with neighbouring authorities to support provision of appropriate sites across the wider Gloucestershire area to meet identified needs</p> <p>1.3.3 To include policies in the JCS and Cheltenham Plan as required to provide for identified needs</p>	<p>The Gloucestershire County GTTSAA has been undertaken and signed off by all local authorities across the County. The report was published alongside the Draft JCS in October 2013, see <a href="http://www.gct-jcs.org/evidencebase">www.gct-jcs.org/evidencebase</a>. The Assessment has identified the need for two pitches to be provided in Cheltenham Borough in the period from 2013 to 2031.</p> <p>As part of the Strategic Assessment of Land Availability process, the Gloucestershire local authorities will identify sites that may be available for future Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation. To commence this work, a county-wide call for sites was carried out between 12 August and 20 September 2014</p> <p>The JCS will also contain a policy for provision of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation.</p>
<p>1.4 We will increase the provision of new affordable housing through Cheltenham</p>	<p>1.4 To liaise with developers to consider the viability of developing on suitable CBC</p>	<p>Liaison meetings between CBC and CBH are underway to consider investment options. Any recommendations will require approval of cabinet members.</p>

Borough Homes	land assets	
1.5 We will seek to bring about a reduction in carbon emissions on new homes	<p>1.5.1 To examine the viability of Code for Sustainable Homes being delivered at Level 4 or above on new affordable homes</p> <p>1.5.2 To consider, through the JCS, whether we can bring about an acceleration of the Government's aim to all new homes to be carbon neutral by 2016.</p>	To be considered as part of the JCS and Cheltenham Plan.
1.6 We will seek to ensure that new affordable homes meet Lifetime Homes targets	1.6 Work with the JCS Team to develop policies that will maximise the provision of new affordable homes that meet identified standards and are easily adaptable, whilst also ensuring that developments are viable	To be considered as part of the JCS and Cheltenham Plan
1.7 We will examine whether we can deliver new affordable housing on sites with a housing development potential of less than 15 dwellings	<p>1.7.1 To review the threshold levels for triggering the provision of new affordable housing</p> <p>1.7.2 To incorporate any changes (if applicable) within the local planning policies.</p>	<p>The JCS will contain a policy approach to affordable housing. Policy options including a lower threshold are currently being investigated following publication of the Final Draft Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment.</p> <p>The JCS will be supported by policies in the Cheltenham Plan which may also contain provisions relating to affordable housing if required.</p>
1.8 We will maximise funding	1.8.1 To review the priority	The local Investment Plan will continue to be reviewed periodically.

opportunities to support delivery of new affordable housing	<p>sites within the Local Investment Plan</p> <p>1.8.2 To review how we can kick start the development of stalled sites</p>	The Planning Policy team conduct a Site Assessment each year. This process will help to identify future development sites, the constraints affecting those sites and possible mechanisms for overcoming these constraints. Where issues are identified, which affect the deliverability of affordable housing, the Council will seek to work with appropriate partners (such as the Homes & Communities Agency)
1.9 We will maximise funding opportunities on our infrastructure sites	1.9 To prioritise sites according to whether they are able to deliver both economic growth and housing	Strategically important sites are identified within the Local Investment Plan with priority being given to those sites with both an economic growth and housing link.

## Priority 2 – Making Best Use of Existing Housing

Outcomes	Action Proposed	Action Taken/Achievements
2.1 We will ensure safety standards in private rented accommodation are met (meeting the council's associated statutory duties)	<p>2.1.1 To work reactively and proactively in the enforcement of relevant housing, environmental protection and public health legislation</p> <p><b>New for the year ahead:</b></p> <p>2.2.2 To develop a revised accreditation scheme for private landlords</p>	<p>In 2012/13, 242 homes were improved in the private sector as a direct result of enforcement action undertaken by the Council's Enforcement Team</p> <p><b>How this will be achieved:</b></p> <p>A new Accreditation Scheme will be developed for private landlords in Cheltenham, for cabinet approval during 2014/15.</p>

<p>2.2 We will seek to ensure that opportunities remain for older, disabled and vulnerable people to access relevant grants or loans (where appropriate) to improve the quality of their homes.</p>	<p>2.2.1 To review the performance and contractual arrangements (if appropriate) with the Homes Improvement Agency</p> <p>2.2.2 To continue to exercise discretion in the awarding of grants/loans to vulnerable owner occupiers who are unable financially to improve their own homes</p>	<p>Reviewed via Safer at Home quarterly county monitoring meetings, comprising of district authority reps across the county, alongside partners within the county council</p> <p>In 2012/13 106 households were awarded grants/loans (Total £798k capital expenditure)</p>
<p>2.3 We will seek to ensure that Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) meet the required quality and management standards</p>	<p>2.3.1 To inspect all HMOs which require a mandatory licence</p> <p>2.3.2 To survey relevant areas to ensure landlords are fulfilling their obligations to apply for mandatory licences</p> <p><b>New for the year ahead:</b></p> <p>2.3.3 To undertake an in depth survey of HMOs on Cheltenham's High Street</p>	<p>Inspections are undertaken periodically prior to the expiry of their current licence. In 2012/13 99 HMOs were inspected and licensees renewed.</p> <p>Subject to staffing resource the St Pauls area will be surveyed to check compliance for mandatory licensing and to collect data to assist in decision making in respect of additional licensing in the area.</p> <p><b>How this will be achieved:</b></p> <p>Subject to staffing resource an in depth survey will be carried out as a follow up to the initial 2013/14 survey, to identify any housing issues that the Council is currently unaware of.</p>
<p><b>2.4 Improving Energy Efficiencies and Affordable</b></p>		

<p><b>Warmth:</b></p> <p>2.4.1 We will ensure that value for money is maintained in the provision of services which focus on improving the energy efficiencies of private sector housing</p> <p>2.4.2 We will promote the use of renewable energies within private sector homes</p>	<p>2.4.1.1 To review how we financially support partners in terms of delivery of agreed outcomes via the Warm &amp; Well Scheme and the Government's Green Deal.</p> <p>2.4.1.2 To regularly monitor and review performance under the new Service Level Agreement with Warm &amp; Well</p> <p>2.4.2 To make reference to existing showcase projects to demonstrate what can be achieved in renewable energy terms</p>	<p><b>Complete:</b></p> <p>We have reviewed our contractual arrangements with Warm &amp; Well in light of the government's Green Deal. This has resulted in a new service level agreement between CBC and Warm &amp; Well, which is more advice focussed and which ensures that maximum advantage is taken from the Green Deal and other government schemes. This review has also resulted in the council making a saving of £50k pa from the £60k pa capital funding currently allocated to this area.</p> <p>Performance is reviewed on a quarterly basis</p> <p>Promotion activities are delivered on an ongoing basis by Severn Wye Energy as agreed via the Affordable Warmth Partnership</p>
<p><b>2.5 Tackling Empty Homes:</b></p> <p>2.5.1 We will seek to increase the levels of reporting of empty homes by local communities</p>	<p>2.5.1 To consider and implement activities that will encourage members of the public and other relevant sources to report any properties they believe are unoccupied</p>	<p>The Council now has an Officer within the Enforcement Team, whose time is dedicated tackling Empty Homes .</p> <p>In 2012/13 180 empty homes (on average each month) were identified as empty for 12 months or more. During the same period, 118 empty homes were brought back into use.</p>

<p>2.5.2 We will ensure that we are able to take tough enforcement action, where necessary</p> <p>2.5.3 We will support the conversion of unused commercial premises into residential use, where appropriate</p> <p>2.5.4 We will seek to make best use of unused publicly-owned properties by supporting their conversion to residential use, where appropriate</p>	<p>2.5.2.1 To make use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (where necessary) to bring empty homes back into use</p> <p><b>New for the year ahead:</b></p> <p>2.5.2.2 To explore the use of Enforced Sale as an alternative option to CPOs for relevant cases.</p> <p>2.5.3 To consider whether a review of local planning policy is required to support the conversion of unused commercial premises into residential premises</p> <p>2.5.4 To explore whether some publicly-owned (unused) properties can be brought back into use</p>	<p>In 2012, Cabinet approved the use of CPOs to bring empty homes back into use. To date, 3 homes have been identified as requiring CPO action and are at differing stages of the legal process.</p> <p><b>How this will be achieved:</b></p> <p>Option considered, with report to cabinet for approval in 2014/15</p> <p>This will be reviewed periodically, and will be influenced by the economic cycle and whether difficulties are observed in applying for, and permissions being given, for these conversions.</p> <p>Discussions are underway between District Authorities and the County Council over the identification of potential sites for the delivery of Extra Care.</p>
<p><b>2.6 The quality of Cheltenham Borough Council's homes are maintained and, where required, improved</b></p> <p>2.6.1 We will improve (where</p>	<p>2.6.1 To agree detailed</p>	<p>Asset Management Strategy is being updated and due for completion March</p>

<p>required) the internal and external conditions of our homes</p> <p>2.6.2 We will continue to ensure that the physical aspects of sheltered housing units meet customer expectations</p> <p>2.6.3 We will seek to ensure that CBH continue to deliver 'excellent services' and that the organisation's continued viability is maintained</p>	<p>priorities for improving the quality of our housing stock, by way of an updated Asset Management Plan - in line with CBC's HRA Business Plan</p> <p>2.6.2 to undertake an options appraisal to address the occurrence of bedsits within 3 of our sheltered schemes</p> <p>2.6.3 To review and undertake regular monitoring arrangements with CBH</p>	<p>2014. The Capital improvement programme is in place and is planned around stock condition data and maintaining decency both internally and externally. Cyclical painting and neighbourhood works programmes in place to improve external aspects.</p> <p>Long term viability of sheltered housing units and future requirements will be addressed in the updated Asset Management Strategy in March 2014.</p> <p>Undertaken on a bimonthly basis via the Liaison Group, which is made up of senior officers from CBC and CBH</p>
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### Priority 3 – Improving Access to and Maintaining Suitable Accommodation

Outcomes	Action Proposed	Action Taken/Achievements
<p>3.1 We will seek to ensure that the Housing Allocations Scheme balances competing needs, whilst supporting sustainable communities</p>	<p>Review Gloucestershire Homeseeker; and in particular, consider:</p> <p>3.1.1 Closing the Housing list to those households not considered to have a housing need</p>	<p><b>Complete:</b> Gloucestershire Homeseeker's Allocations Policy was reviewed, and following wide consultation, the changes were approved by Cabinet in April 2013.</p> <p>The key changes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligning the bedroom eligibility criteria with the Housing Benefit eligibility criteria. This has the effect of limiting the number of new households entering social housing from being affected by the bedroom tax</li> </ul>



	<p>3.1.2 Removing social housing tenants who wish to transfer homes from the housing list (to avoid competing with non-tenants in housing need)</p> <p>3.1.3 Aligning bedroom entitlement to the Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance Regulations</p> <p>3.1.4 Whether additional priority should be given to households leaving the Armed Forces</p> <p>3.1.5 Whether additional priority should be given to households with strong local connections to Cheltenham</p> <p>3.1.6 Whether to widen the scheme to include private sector lettings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firming up the priority given to social housing tenants who are under-occupying, so that those who need to move as a result of the bedroom tax are better able to do so.</li> <li>• Awarding additional preference to ex-members of the Armed Forces to ensure that the Policy is in line with new Regulations which came out last year.</li> <li>• Simplifying the banding system by removing the multiple banding criteria</li> <li>• Reducing the number of households in the emergency band, by reducing the time limit during which they can wait for their preferred accommodation, thereby ensuring that those in greatest need have the opportunity to move more quickly.</li> <li>• Making the Policy fairer by placing households who are ready for move-on from supported housing on a more even footing with homeless households in temporary accommodation</li> </ul> <p>(please refer to the Cabinet report dated April 2013 for further details)</p>
<p>3.2 We will continue to ensure that Gloucestershire Homeseeker's Choice Based Lettings Allocation Scheme provides equitable access for all, regardless of vulnerability, etc.</p>	<p>3.2. To continue to feed into the County Council's Equality's Group</p>	<p>Issues can be picked up via Gloucestershire Homeseeker's Operational Group and, where appropriate, fed into the Equality's Group.</p>

<p>3.3 We will seek to ensure the Housing Options Service continues to deliver high quality value for money services</p>	<p>3.3.1 To review the use of tenancy management and lettings type services for private landlords</p> <p>3.3.2 To undertake a commissioning review of the housing options service</p> <p><b>New for the year ahead:</b></p> <p>3.3.3 To implement the Spa Lettings Service for homeless families seeking private rented accommodation</p> <p>3.3.4 To monitor and review the delivery of the Housing Options Service by Cheltenham Borough Homes</p>	<p><b>Complete:</b></p> <p>Cabinet approved in July 2013 the development and implementation of a new tenancy management service called, SPA Lettings. This will be delivered by the Housing Options Team</p> <p><b>Complete:</b></p> <p>Cabinet approved in July 2013 the transfer of the Housing Option Service to Cheltenham Borough Homes. Activities were undertaken to ensure this service was transferred to CBH on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013.</p> <p><b>How this will be achieved:</b></p> <p>Legal documentation will be finalised in preparation for launching the service, which is likely to be undertaken in 2014. The development of this service will be influenced by the success (or otherwise) of existing homelessness prevention services in delivering our outcomes.</p> <p>Bimonthly monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure the Housing Options Service continues to support the council's key outcomes and delivers value for money</p>
<p>3.4 We will seek to ensure that low-income households are more easily able to</p>	<p>3.4.1 To assist in the implementation of a county-wide private leasing scheme</p>	<p>Chapter 1, the organisation delivering a private leasing scheme across Gloucestershire, is continuing to market for more properties from private landlords, and is increasing its portfolio of leased properties both across</p>

<p>access and maintain accommodation in the private rented sector</p>	<p>for vulnerable single people (See also 3.3.1 above)</p>	<p>Gloucestershire and in Cheltenham.</p>
<p>3.5 We will continue to ensure that older people and individuals with disabilities are better able to live independently</p>	<p>3.5.1 To ensure that relatively minor adaptations for CBC tenants continue to be administered via CBH rather than through the use of DFGs</p> <p>3.5.2 To consider use of Adaptation Support Grant and/or Relocation Grant as an alternative to the use of DFGs, where appropriate</p> <p>3.5.3 To promote the uptake of the Lifeline Alarm Service</p> <p>3.5.4 To consider the use of new assistive technology</p> <p>3.5.5 To review CBC sheltered housing services and support service provision for older people in our communities</p>	<p>Protocol arrangements are in place to ensure minor adaptations continue to be administered by CBH for CBC tenants, using the HRA</p> <p>In 2012/13 111 DFG applications were approved by CBC, with minor adaptations continuing to be delivered by CBH.</p> <p>Each application is considered on a case by case basis. 2 applications were awarded grants to facilitate a move to more suitable accommodation, rather than carrying out a DFG on their existing property, with a further 2 applicants gaining Adaptation Support Grant assistance to enable DFGs to proceed.</p> <p>The Lifeline Alarm Service continues to be marketed, with annual increases continuing year on year. In 2012/13 there was a net increase of 43 households using the service.</p> <p>The lifeline service now offers additional peripherals which can be added to the existing lifeline unit. These include smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, flood detectors and bogus caller buttons. The lifeline team also works in conjunction with the Gloucestershire Telecare Service, delivered by the Adult Care Directorate. Clients are referred onto this more specialist service where appropriate.</p> <p>CBC has entered into a new 12 month contractual agreement with Supporting People to consider how, if at all, CBC can (via Cheltenham Borough Homes) transition to more flexible housing support arrangements for older people, both within CBC sheltered housing schemes and within the immediate surrounding neighbourhoods. CBH have put together a transition plan, outlining in broad terms how this plan will be implemented over the 12 month period from October 2013. Service transformation review is presently being undertaken in</p>

	<p>3.5.6 To seek to implement a strengths-based community development approach to meeting community needs for older people</p>	<p>consultation with tenants and stakeholders which will result in an agreed Sheltered Housing Standard for Cheltenham.</p> <p>The Positive Participation Partnership have set up a Task &amp; Finish Group to undertake an analysis of community assets and needs in 2 pilot areas: Hatherley and Springfield. The outcome of this work will help shape how needs can be met through a strengths-based approach to community development.</p>
<p>3.6 We will seek to ensure that the decommissioning and re-commissioning of housing related support services (through Supporting People) has minimal adverse impacts on Cheltenham residents</p>	<p>3.6.1 To assist in SP's review of accommodation-based support and community support provision</p> <p>3.6.2 to assist in the development and implementation of the county-wide Reconnection Policy</p> <p>3.6.3 To assist in the development and implementation of the county-wide Gateway Assessment Service</p> <p>3.6.4 To continue to implement and review (as required) the County-wide Deposit Loan Scheme</p>	<p>A new 6 unit direct access provision and a drop-in, assessment and referral centre is now available in Cheltenham for homeless individuals with chaotic and complex needs. This provision, by P3, part replaces the Nightshelter provision previously available in Gloucester. (Gloucester also has 8 units of direct access). CBC's Core Strategy Group rep for Supporting People was part of the panel which re-commissioned this service</p> <p>Event held in Cheltenham in April 2013 for supported housing providers, in order to embed the new reconnection policy. The effectiveness of its implementation will be monitored by a county-wide resource: the County Homelessness Coordinator, with District Authorities feeding into this via the Gloucestershire Homelessness Implementation Group.</p> <p>SP are currently developing an IT-based application system to help inform how outcomes are being delivered. We will continue to inform the development of this service via SP's Core Strategy Group.</p> <p>A report has been submitted to SP detailing key outcomes arising from the scheme. The budget for this initiative is due to run out by March 2014. Conversations are therefore underway over whether the scheme can be re-financed and if so, whether other delivery options should be considered.</p>

	<p><b>New for the year ahead:</b></p> <p>3.6.5 To seek further finance from Supporting People for the continued running of the county scheme.</p>	<p><b>How this will be achieved:</b></p> <p>As above</p>
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## Priority 4 – Tackling Homelessness

Outcomes	Action Proposed	Action Taken/Achievements
4.1 We will reduce debt and maximise incomes for households on a low income	<p>4.1.1 To promote the uptake of unclaimed Benefits and improve financial inclusion and the financial capability of households</p> <p>4.1.2 Ensure effective delivery of the Advice and Inclusion Service</p>	<p>Benefit Take-up Officer post reviewed, and its scope widened to ensure a focus also on money advice and debt prevention advice for those at risk of becoming homeless and seeking alternative accommodation in the private rented sector.</p> <p>Direct awareness raising with households affected by the reforms, with a particular focus on engaging with households affected by the benefit cap.</p> <p>Universal awareness-raising through the production of a cross-tenure leaflet about the reforms, available both in print and on the website.</p> <p>Contact with lettings agencies to advise of the changes and of the advice and support that is available in Cheltenham to support their tenants.</p> <p>Robustly reviewed and monitored quarterly.</p>
4.2 We will reduce under-occupation within social	4.2.1 To review the priority given to under-occupants	<p><b>Complete:</b> Changes approved by Cabinet in April 2012 means that emergency priority is</p>

<p>housing for those residents no longer able to afford their accommodation as a result of the Welfare Benefit changes.</p>	<p>within Gloucestershire Homeseeker Allocation Scheme</p> <p>4.2.2 To explore how the Tenants Incentive Scheme can be expanded to facilitate moves to smaller accommodation</p> <p>4.2.3 To promote the use of, and support tenants in identifying a potential move through, the Homeswap Scheme</p>	<p>awarded to households downsizing from larger social properties to non-family accommodation, with gold band being awarded to those looking to move to smaller family accommodation.</p> <p><b>Complete:</b> CBH have undertaken a range of activities to mitigate against the worst impact of the welfare reforms, including an expansion of the Tenants Incentive Scheme (known as 'Your Move') to include all households affected by the Housing Benefit under-occupation rules.</p> <p>CBH and other RPs have been proactive in promoting this Scheme, through a variety of mechanisms, and RPs will continue to explore new ways of raising its schemes awareness as another means by which a house move can be facilitated.</p>
<p>4.3 We will make best use of the newly proposed locally administered grants/loans – which are scheduled to replace the county-administered schemes (i.e. crisis loans and community care grants)</p>	<p>4.3 To consider local priorities, potential service models and administrative arrangements which will best support delivery</p>	<p><b>Complete:</b> CBC and partners informed the County Council, via its consultation mechanisms, key priorities in shaping the new model in light of local needs. This service has now been commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council.</p> <p>We will continue to inform the county council of any issues arising, via the Supporting People Core Strategy Group.</p>
<p>4.4 We will reduce rough sleeping and the risk of rough sleeping/homelessness for individuals with complex</p>	<p>4.4 To ensure adequate provision of an Assertive Outreach Service</p>	<p>Cheltenham Housing Aid Centre are currently grant-funded by the Council to deliver assertive outreach services to roughsleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping as a result of their complex needs.</p> <p>This service will continue to be reviewed and monitored regularly by CBC</p>

needs	<p>4.5 We will seek to reduce the number of young people at risk of becoming homeless</p> <p>4.5.1 To expand the availability of the Deposit Bond Scheme for under 35s, and provide additional incentives for landlords</p> <p>4.5.2 To work with partners across the county to support the development and implementation of the Youth Housing Strategy</p> <p>4.5.3 To consider the development of additional early intervention prevention initiatives across the county, using one-off funding (£80k) from CLG.</p> <p>4.5.4 To ensure the continued effectiveness of the young people's Mediation Service, and review as required</p>	<p>Now incorporated within the SPA Lettings Service, which was approved by Cabinet in July 2013.</p> <p>The service will be launched in 2014/15.</p> <p>New commissioning arrangements are being considered by the County Council. We will influence those decisions via our District leads Supporting People's Core Strategy Group.</p> <p>Led by Cheltenham Borough Council, the District Authorities and the County Council commissioned Infobuzz to deliver peer-education work in key schools across Gloucestershire on the causes and realities of homelessness, and to raise awareness of the agencies available which can support young people at risk of homelessness. This is a 2 year contract which expires in September 2014.</p> <p>This service will continue to be monitored by a panel of district authorities, led by CBC.</p> <p><b>Complete:</b> Whilst this service was beneficial for clients who used it, the number of service users was such that it was failing to provide sufficient value for money for the Council, compared with other homelessness prevention initiatives.</p> <p>Quarterly reviews over a period of 2 years failed to result in an increase in service usage, in spite of considerable work by CCP to market and promote awareness of this service, both via the Housing &amp; Support Forum and other partnership arrangements. The Council therefore made a decision to de-commission this contract in July 2013.</p>
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	<p>4.5.5 To ensure the effective implementation of the Southwark Protocol, and review this county-wide protocol, as necessary</p> <p>4.5.6 To ensure Nightstop service delivers desired outcomes</p>	<p>Cheltenham Borough Council led the County on the development of this protocol, which is being monitored by Districts, with any issues being feed back directly to the county.</p> <p>This service is reviewed and monitored quarterly.</p>
<p>4.6 We will ensure that care leavers and looked after children are supported on their pathway to independent accommodation</p>	<p>4.6 To consider and implement agreed protocols/joint working practices</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings are held with CBC, Social Workers, Assistant Team Manager (16+ Service), Youth Housing Advice Service and any other relevant support providers to discuss Care Leavers and their housing options. The group monitors those who are leaving care and identifies the most appropriate housing solutions with the view to preventing homelessness. The group also monitors those living in supported housing, private rented and social housing to ensure that they are maintaining their tenancy and are appropriately housed. Care Leavers that are ready to live independently are also approved for Move-On, via Gloucestershire Homeseekers Allocations Scheme</p>
<p>4.7 We will maximise housing options for households experiencing domestic abuse</p>	<p>4.7 To promote the take up of CBC's Sanctuary Scheme, where appropriate</p>	<p>District Housing Authorities have now agreed to joint protocol arrangements to provide a county wide service, with referrals being made normally through Supporting People's commissioned Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Service or IDVA (a support service for those at very high risk of domestic abuse) if the survivor wants to remain in their home. In these cases, an assessment of works is carried out and implemented to make the homes safe. Works can vary from target hardening (window locks extra lighting bolts on doors etc) to a full 'sanctuary' room.</p>

## Priority 5 – Creating Stronger, Safer and Healthier Communities



<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Action Proposed</b>	<b>Action Taken/Achievements</b>
5.1 We will seek to improve outcomes for vulnerable adults	5.1 To set up a working group to agree practical solutions to support the needs of vulnerable adults	This has now been incorporated within the Inspiring Families programme (see 5.2 below) and its effectiveness will remain under review.
5.2 We will seek to reduce intergenerational child poverty	5.2 To bring about more effective referral mechanisms into the Inspiring Families Group	Referral mechanisms are effective, with over 26 agencies are now supporting IF with direct delivery, with 13 Different Trusted Individuals. Mechanisms will continue to remain under review.
5.3 We will seek to ensure vulnerable households are not financially excluded and are more financially capable	<p>5.3.1 To ensure there is a broader understanding of financial exclusion issues within Cheltenham, and that these are considered and supported by the wider Partnerships</p> <p><b>New for the year ahead:</b></p> <p>5.3.2 To seek to ensure that agencies who are committed to promoting financial inclusion are well coordinated across Cheltenham to support the needs of all residents</p>	<p>A range of activities have been undertaken to increase awareness of the work being done across all tenures to understand the needs and to help support those adversely affected by the welfare reforms. This included the delivery of a Members' Seminar and the setting up of a Task &amp; Finish Group within the Positive Participation Partnership, which resulted in an informative cross-tenure leaflet being produced and circulated to households affected, relevant organisations and the council's website</p> <p><b>How this will be achieved:</b></p> <p>The transfer of the Housing Options Service to CBH, provides CBH with an opportunity, at an appropriate time, to expand their existing Financial Inclusion Working Group to consider the needs of households across all tenures, in addition to their current focus on the needs of CBC tenants.</p>
5.4 We will ensure that our communities are more cohesive and inclusive	5.4 To explore more joint working opportunities across the housing and voluntary	A number of Task & Finish Groups have been set up by the Positive Participation Partnership which have included housing representation; including Welfare Reform and Street Begging. Another T&F group is focussing on

	sectors  <b>New for the year ahead:</b>  5.4.1 To develop a social landlords forum for Registered Providers with social housing in Cheltenham	developing a strengths based approach to community development for older people in 2 pilot areas, and CBH have representation on one of these sub-groups. <b>How this will be achieved:</b>  Discussions are underway to develop a RP forum for Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury. This will reduce of meetings for RPs, maximise attendance, and bring about a wider sharing of good practice and learning.
5.5 We will ensure that our communities are safer	5.5.1 To review and develop existing partnership arrangements for tackling anti-social behaviour within Cheltenham          5.5.2 To review CBH Safer Estates Service, with increased emphasis on prevention	ASB Steering Group with Co-Chairs from Police, CBH and CBC now meet on a monthly basis to agree action on cases/incidents brought before them. Underneath this are ASB Working Groups for both Cheltenham North and South who deal with day to day issues, referring the more serious cases to the ASB Steering Group for action.  A small ASB Project Group has been set up by the ASB Steering Group to review the new draft proposals from central government to deal with asb issues, which amongst other things gives more empowerment to individuals and communities alike, to agree a positive way forward to implement these changes, once they become law, which is likely to be in the summer of 2014.  <b>Complete:</b> Service reviewed and new staffing structure in place, with greater emphasis on preventative work through the creation of new Tenant Liaison Officer posts.
5.6 We will ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected through the effective implementation of Safeguarding	5.6 To ensure that adequate training is delivered to relevant officers, and that consistent approaches are followed on safeguarding matters	Dedicated Officer within CBC to ensure issues are coordinated and training is cascaded down from Managers through to frontline officers.  Commissioners also ensure that safeguarding matters are adequately covered in the contractual arrangements with providers.
5.7 We will increase the	5.7 To integrate the Customer	<b>Complete:</b>

opportunities for community participation and engagement	Excellence Group within CBH's governance structure	CBH has incorporated its Tenant Scrutiny Improvement Panel within its governance arrangements, with a particular focus on looking at how services delivered by CBH can be improved.
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